

Short North Design Guidelines – Stakeholder Responses

Initial Summary - February 26, 2010

This document summarizes stakeholder responses to a questionnaire prepared for use in the Short North Design Guidelines process. This effort is focused on the development of unified design guidelines for application on both sides of High Street between I-670 and Fifth Avenue.

1) In what capacities are you connected to the Short North - resident, business owner, commission member, developer, etc.?

Respondents included: residents, designer for area projects, civic leader, property owners, developers, business owner, shop owner, non-profit director, and architectural review commission members (current and former).

2) Have you presented applications to IVC, VVC or other Columbus architectural review commissions?

Several stakeholders had presented applications as project owners and designers.

3) If so, how was the experience?

Most respondents were positive about the experience of architectural review and the benefits it provided to individual projects and the neighborhood more broadly. Some did note that that individual personalities/perspectives were sometimes arbitrary, making it difficult for the applicant to navigate the review process. Importance of guideline-based, rather than opinion-based, review was noted. Experience is best approached as a partnership between applicant and commission.

4) Are you familiar with the existing architectural guidelines for VVC/IVC?

Almost all respondents were familiar or somewhat familiar with one or both sets.

5) What aspects of the district's physical form are most appealing to you?

Respondents had no difficulty providing answers, which covered a broad range of topics.

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| • <i>Linear character</i> | • <i>Idiosyncrasy of built environment</i> |
| • <i>Scale</i> | • <i>Buildings built to sidewalk</i> |
| • <i>Dynamic/evolving nature</i> | • <i>Historic nature</i> |
| • <i>Commercial presence</i> | • <i>Density</i> |
| • <i>Independent businesses</i> | • <i>Pedestrian orientation</i> |
| • <i>Inventive reuse of buildings</i> | • <i>Convenience</i> |
| • <i>Mix of uses (by site and within buildings)</i> | • <i>Traffic generally localized</i> |
| • <i>Materiality</i> | • <i>Proximity of residential</i> |

6) What aspects of the district's physical form are least appealing to you?

Respondents provided a range of answers with no particular consensus.

- Disconnect from downtown
- Disproportionate new construction (too large/tall)
- Inadequate parking
- Length (not compact/lacks cohesion)
- Current use of arch lights (strobe/multi-color)
- Variation between east/west side.
- Lack of modern style/architecture
- Disrepair of infrastructure (particularly in north)
- Lack of consistency of infrastructure (signals, street lights, utilities)
- Parking shortage
- Crime
- Dirt
- Increasing use of glass as structural element
- Northern portion of the district (wider streetscape/more gaps)
- Lack of certain retail (grocery/deli)

7) What positive changes have you seen in the corridor with respect to development?

While many answers were provided here, the most common theme was the positive impact of investment and infill, despite varying opinions about the merits of individual projects.

- Investment
- Infill on vacant lots/street presence
- Taller/higher density projects
- Short North SID
- Presence of limited retail on alleys
- New residential
- Projects with own parking
- Revitalization of historic building stock
- Independent businesses/arts investment
- Recognition as a destination/area promotion
- Potential for new hotel
- Arches
- Pocket parks
- Quality maintained by commissions

8) Any buildings or projects that stand out as particularly good examples of appropriate development for the area? Why?

This question received many responses with a few buildings being mentioned multiple times (Jackson, Victorian Gate, Dakota. General reasons projects were deemed successes included presence of adequate parking and incorporation of contemporary design.

- Dakota (successful verticality)
- Victorian Gate (High/Park street presence)
- Warren Street Multi-family
- Condos- industrial bldg behind Bollinger
- Kramer Place

- *Jackson (several mentions –marquee project, verticality that works well with lower height neighbors)*
- *Rigsby's Building*
- *The Cap*
- *Christopher Columbus Park*
- *Goodale Park*
- *Tasi Building (mixed use/reuse)*
- *Byzantium (successful reuse)*
- *NE Corner of 2nd/Summit*
- *Murals (thoughtful ones provide big impact)*
- *Garden Theater redevelopment*
- *771 North High (proportion, detail, materials)*
- *Winder Building (restoration of original style with modern use)*
- *682 Pearl (residential w/ parking)*
- *Addy Building (good example of rehab)*

9) Do you see changes or trends you consider problematic or harmful to the district?

This question elicited several common themes:

- *Increase in buildings that are too tall and out of scale with district – some felt that too many of such projects will erode the qualities of the district that attracted the investment.*
- *Changing nature of retail due to rising rents – loss of independent shops/galleries and increase in restaurants/bars, chains, etc. (could lose area's character)*
- *Parking pressure*
- *Inadequate preservation and code enforcement staffing*
- *Lack of clear graphics/signage guidelines*

10) Are some portions of the district better suited to higher intensity projects than others?

- *Vacant sites and sites with suburban setbacks*
- *Northern portion of the district where street is wider and there are more gaps/lower floor area ratio*
- *Sites with small building footprints/single story*
- *An area along High, but not into the adjacent residential areas (unless replacing surface parking and in scale)*
- *Site-by-site, not many locations remaining that can Ibiza-sized projects*
- *Area further north can handle larger scale/higher (5 stories/60') buildings*
- *Site-by-site, but perhaps closer to downtown.*

11) Are there any specific locations in the district where you can see a great opportunity to make improvements in the future?

Most respondents point out the importance of localized conditions in determining the potential scale and nature of a project.

- *Sites moving north from the southern core*
- *Vacant sites and sites with suburban setbacks*
- *City parking lots*

- 4th and Summit
- Goodale Park (better gardens, topiary, better use of shelter house)
- White Castle
- Dollar Store/Yoga on High
- Jeffrey Place site
- Ibiza site
- Garden Theater Block (renovation)

12) What are the issues you think are most important for new guidelines to address?

Building height & scale, land use mix and parking were the most commonly discussed issues:

- Building height
- Parking – adequacy
- Parking – format, location, access
- Land use mix
- Street level commercial
- Design detail
- Quality of materials
- Unified, well illustrated guidelines
- Signage
- Murals –placement and long term care
- Consistency of built environment
- Balance between flexibility and parameters
- Differences between corner sites and mid-block sites
- Lighting
- Governance by a single commission
- Outdoor dining limitations – sidewalks are too narrow in some cases

13) Where do you see the district in 10 years?

Respondents clearly see continued investment, but are divided about its impact.

- Full buildout to 5th Avenue
- Increase in corporate/ chain store tenants and loss of independent retail/galleries
- Lack of affordability
- Development at a pace exceeding other areas
- Density doubled, which will support local business
- Sustained/increased arts scene
- Fewer art galleries and retail shops
- Street could lose some of its appeal due to continued development

14) Do you have a particular vision for the Short North you would like to share?

- Public transportation – street car/light rail (could be key to supporting increased intensity)

- *Premier arts district with underpinnings of historic fabric*
- *Destination that draws visitors to the city*
- *Marquee projects at south end (hotel) and north end 5th and High*
- *Mixed use – critical to success of the area*
- *Four – 200+ car parking garages*
- *Elimination of surface parking on High*
- *Variegated scale*
- *Parking dealt with on –site based on market*
- *Consistency of design quality*
- *Consideration of widened sidewalks and bike lanes*
- *Independent businesses/galleries*
- *Lots of small shops with variety of goods/services for daily use*
- *Maintain its position as the new “Main Street” of downtown.*
- *Mix of ages, socioeconomic levels*
- *Creative center*

15) Anything else you want us to be aware of?

- *Proactive code enforcement*
- *Appreciation for preservation staff’s efforts despite reductions*
- *Provide commissions with more discretion for parking issues*
- *Allow more contextual interpretation of quantitative standards*
- *Encourage outdoor seating and other things that bring activity to the street.*

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